



## Review Article

### HOLISTIC LIFE STYLE AND FOOD HABITS FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT IN ARSHAS (HAEMORRHOIDS) - AN AYURVEDIC VIEW

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#### ABSTRACT

Ayurveda places great importance on one's *Pathya* or lifestyle (eating habits and daily routine). Ayurveda provides us with the knowledge of how to prevent disease and how to eliminate its root cause if it occurs. *Arshas* (haemorrhoids/ piles) are common and unique disease to humans at some time in their life as no other living being suffers with this ailment. Further in the classics of Ayurveda explained that ailment kills the afflicted like an enemy hence it is coined as *Arshas*. The disease is initiated with *Agnimandya* (Improper digestion) due to improper food habits and lifestyles. Further *Agnimandya* leads chronic constipation and manifest the disease. In *Ayurveda* and contemporary medical science various conservative and surgical methods are described. However haemorrhoids can reoccur even after the good quality of the management hence in *Ayurveda* it is mentioned as one among *Ashtamahagada* (diseases difficult to treat). In this regard various reasons are explained for re-manifestation of the disease among those factors, important is not maintaining the proper food habits and lifestyle methods. In these conditions *Ayurveda* is having major role as greater importance has been given in correction of the food habits and modification of the lifestyles as a main factor or acts as a adjuvant to the therapies in treating the diseases. In the management of *Arshas* various regimens of food habits and lifestyles are described. If these are implemented properly can help to increase appetite, reduces constipation and also prevents the manifestation as well as avoids recurrence of the disease.

**KEYWORDS:** *Arsha*, Food habits, *Agnimandya*, Haemorrhoids.

#### INTRODUCTION

The daily and seasonal regimens mentioned in Ayurvedic classics are mainly directed by the influence of external environment on internal milieu which is mainly controlled by *Agni*. The present culture of considering old wisdom as useless intrusion in right to freedom is resulting in increase various lifestyle disorder at an alarming rate. Among those *Arsha* is one of the lifestyle diseases which increasing at an alarming rate in our society. The disease hemorrhoids can be considered as *Arshas* in *Ayurveda* and it is mentioned under the category of *Maharogas*<sup>[1]</sup> (the disease which is very difficult to treat or due to its nature of recurrence even after the appropriate therapy). It is further explained that *Arshas* gives the trouble to the patient just like enemy. Recent statistics reveals that irrespective of age, sex, socio-economic status, people suffer from hemorrhoids. John Goligher said that 50% of the people above the age of 50 years suffer from one or another degree of haemorrhoids<sup>[2]</sup>.

The common causative factors are eating the contradictory foods, sitting on irregular seat or in wrong posture, excessive exercise, injury to the anal region, forceful initiating or suppressing the natural urges and in the complicated delivery etc. and such other causes, increases the *Apana Vata*, which in turn vitiates the blood and skin in the anal region and manifests into six types of *Arshas* (haemorrhoids)<sup>[3,4]</sup>.

The common clinical features are loss of appetite, pain in the anal region, difficulty in passing the stools, oedema of the body, vomiting, headache, very much worried and inactive, bleeding per rectum, backache and emaciation, etc<sup>[5]</sup>.

#### Management

*Acharya Susruta* has mentioned four-fold treatment for *Arshas* - Drug therapy (*Bheshaja karma*), surgical therapy (*Shastra karma*), Chemical cauterization (*Kshara karma*) and Cauterization (*Agni Karma*); on the basis of *Doshic* involvement and stage of the *Arshas*<sup>[6]</sup>. However the basic management principle for every disease in Ayurveda is to avoid the causative factor, which helps either in breaking etio-pathogenesis at basic level of disease or adjuvant to the drug and surgical therapies. In this disease the basic causative factor is improper food and lifestyles leads to *Agnimandya* (Improper digestion) and further manifests the disease. Hence improving the appetite is basic step in treating the disease. In the classics of Ayurveda also considered improving the appetite is basic treatment principle for the all the types *Arshas*<sup>[7]</sup>, if this is not followed disease may not cured completely or reoccurs even after good management. It is also emphasised that no treatment is successful without proper adoption of do's and don'ts of the food and life style habits. Further explanations are available in different *Samhitas* that *Agni* (digestive power) should be improved

simultaneously<sup>[7]</sup>. The change of the food and life style habits will improves the appetite, may help to cure the disease in the early stage or may be complimentary to the medical or surgical therapy and those can be followed as mentioned below<sup>[8]</sup>.

### Food and Life style habits (*Ahara & Vihara*)

#### 1. Food category (*Anna varga*)

- a. *Hordeum vulgare* - Barley (*Yava*) & *Triticum sativum* - Wheat (*Godhuma*): These are predominately used food grains in India, which contains good amount of fibers thus helps for the smooth evacuation of the stools.

#### 2. Vegetable category (*Shaka varga*)

- a. *Amorphophallus campanulatus* - Elephant foot (*Surana*): it is a tuber and commonly used vegetable and can taken by boiling or backing of the tubers on the cow dung will helps in the *Arshas*<sup>[9,10]</sup>.
- b. *Trichosanthes dioica* - Wild snake gourd (*Patola*): Fruit part of the plant is used as vegetable and is having the mild laxative property<sup>[9,10]</sup>.
- c. *Chenopodium album* - Chenopodium (*Vastuka*): Leafy vegetable are strongly indicated in the piles disease as they contains abundant amounts of fibrous content and helps to softens the stools<sup>[9,10]</sup>. This leafy vegetable commonly used in all places of the India and having the property of laxative effect and it is specifically mentioned for the haemorrhoids In Ayurvedic classics<sup>[8]</sup>.

#### 3. Fruit category (*Phala varga*)

- a. *Emblica officinalis* - *Emblis myrobalan* (*Amalaki*): It gives the good appetite, one of the best anti-oxidant and having laxative the property<sup>[9,10]</sup>.
- b. *Feronia limonia* - Elephant or Wood apple (*Kapittha*): This fruit is commonly used in many of the vegetable preparations in southern places of India and it helps as hemostat in the bleeding conditions<sup>[11]</sup>.
- c. *Vitis vinifera* - Grapes (*Draksha*): It is a good appetizer and having the mild laxative property<sup>[9,10]</sup>.

#### 4. Accessory foods (*Ahara upavarga*)

- a. *Allium cepa* - Onion (*Palandu*): It is a good appetizer and having the mild laxative property<sup>[9,10]</sup>.
- b. *Piper nigrum* - Black pepper (*Maricha*), *Zingiber officinale* - Ginger (*Shunti*): These are used in the preparation of the different vegetable dishes and it helps in improving the appetite and digestion<sup>[9,10]</sup>.
- c. *Terminalia chebula* - *Chebulic Myrobalan* or Ink nut (*Haritaki*): If it is taken regularly many of the diseases can be avoided and is having the laxative property and helps in all types of piles<sup>[9,10]</sup>.

#### 5. Milk catageroy (*Ksheera varga*)

- a. **Milk (*Kshira*)**: Milk is advisable in the piles patients, as it is having the properties of demulcent, laxative etc. In the Ayurvedic classics Goat and Sheep's milk is advised<sup>[12]</sup>, but in their absence cow milk is advisable.
- b. **Butter milk (*Takra*)**: The processed and stored buttermilk in mud pot is the best in the piles. It

should be used as food, drink and medicine by the *Arshas* patient, as it helps in the relieving of the constipation, allows the *Vata* in right direction and improves the digestive capacity of the patient<sup>[13]</sup>.

6. **Non-vegetarian category (*Mamsa*)**: Though non-vegetarian food is contraindicated in *Arshas* as it causes constipation but it is proved to be exceptional in the *Vataja arshas* and among all deer meat (*Mruga mamsa*) is advisable<sup>[14]</sup>.

- a. The patient having excessive predominant *Vayu* with profuse bleeding should take the food with sweet sour meat, chicken soup etc.
- b. In bleeding piles may take diet of fresh ghee prepared from butter, goat's meat, *Sastika* and *Shali* rice, fresh wine scum and fresh wine.
- c. Non vegetarian can take diet of well cooked meat of Hare, Deer, Quail, Grey partridge and black Antelope soured, sweetened or slightly spiced<sup>[15]</sup>.

7. **Alcohol Ingestion (*Madya sevana*)**: Excessive intake of alcohol is contraindicated in this disease. But the wine (which is fermented beverages along with medicated powders) is advisable in the proper dose in the patients who are addicted to wine<sup>[16]</sup>.

- a. For alcoholic, drink salted wine or *Sidhu*<sup>[17]</sup> (wine of sugarcane juice and *Saurviraka* (sour drink) added with jaggery and dry ginger before meals<sup>[18]</sup>.

8. Maintaining adequate hydration: 8-12 glasses of water daily

- a. Boiled and cooled water or water boiled with *Kantakari* (*Solanum xanthocarpum*) or *Dhanyaka* (*Coriandrum sativum*) and *Sunthi* (*Zinziber officinale*). This carminates *Vata* and stool<sup>[19]</sup>.

9. Taking the food in the regular intervals, avoiding the junk foods, avoiding more intakes of coffee, tea and other drinks.

10. Regular physical exercises or yoga is required as sedentary life may cause the constipation. Yoga like *Pavanmuktasan*, *Vajrasan*, *Sarvangasan*, *Tadasan* etc.

The above mentioned vegetables and fruits specifically in mentioned in the management of *Arshas*. There are many vegetables and fruits mentioned in the Ayurvedic classics helps in the piles disease. The patient of piles should always use diet and drugs which are carminative for the *Vata* and promotive of digestive power. They should never use the substances contrary to the above and those mentioned under etiological factor.

### CONCLUSION

In Ayurveda the first principle of the management for any disease is to avoid the causative factors. In India since the ancient period the food and life style pattern are described as per the traditional aspect which is been ignored in the present materialistic era and in turn it is becoming major triggering factor for the manifestation of many diseases. The sad news is that people who are otherwise healthy will avoid going to the doctor out of anxiety or fear but if they will realize that this is a common problem, and with proper treatment, can be permanently cured. Dietary changes are crucial to haemorrhoids home treatment, but they may not be enough. Keeping your

digestive tract functioning properly may also require the lifestyle changes. Thus the modification of the food and life style habits is the need of the hour which will help in preventing, early recovery, avoids the recurrence of the disease.

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